

Record

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CPC turning mothers from abortions

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Ruby Mullins has a batting average that would make a Major League All-Star green with envy. Mullins, director of the Crisis Pregnancy Center at Winston Association in Louisville, has convinced every woman who has entered counseling at the center that abortion is not the answer to a crisis pregnancy.

In baseball, that's known as "batting one thousand." In other words, her record is perfect. She gets a hit every time she comes up to bat. She always comes through for her team — and her Savior.

"Since October of last year, we have seen 19 women from this area. There have been no abortions. Six boys and four girls have been born. Eight of the women prayed to receive Christ, and six recommitted their lives to Christ," said Mullins, whose husband Mike pastors West End Church in Louisville.

Mullins has a formula for reaching out to a woman who find herself in the midst of a crisis pregnancy. "We find out about her personal life, her social life, and her spiritual life. We always present the Gospel on the first visit. We let her know we love her and her baby, and we let her know that having her baby is the right decision," she said.

Pressure from parents and boyfriends are the two main reasons women consider abortions, Mullins points out. "We don't deal with argumentative boyfriends or parents. We just ask them to leave. It's the woman who is most affected by her crisis pregnancy, and she's the one we want to reach first," she explained.

That's not to say boyfriends and parents are pushed aside. "I counseled a pregnant girl who is a junior in high school. She is an 'A' student and star basketball player. Her goal is to become a lawyer. When she first came to the Crisis Pregnancy Center, she told me her life was over. She had been taken off the basketball team, which was her hope for a college scholarship. She thought her world had ended.

"I talked with her and set up a schedule of future visits, which always includes Bible study. I asked her not only to read the Bible passages but to report on the meaning of the passages. When she read about Jesus being the resurrection and the life, she accepted Christ and made the decision not to abort her baby.

"Her grandmother called me not long after that and told me she had noticed a complete change of attitude in her granddaughter. The girl gave birth to her baby, is back in school, playing basketball, and will be going to college when she gradu-



TINY BABIES — Paul Blanchard (left), missions director for Winston Association in Louisville, and Ruby Mullins, director of the association's Crisis Pregnancy Center, inspect the tiny plastic models of babies that Mullins uses to counsel pregnant women on the various stages of fetal development. Mullins and the Crisis Pregnancy Center, which receives financial support from individuals, churches and the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering, have been highly successful in convincing women not to abort their babies. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

ates from high school," Mullins said. Thus a ministry channel has been opened to the girl's entire family.

"The rewards of this ministry are awesome. I get to see girls' lives changed because of Jesus. I teach total sexual abstinence until marriage, and I get to see them change their focus in life for the better," Mullins said.

Her youngest client at the Crisis Pregnancy Center has been age 12; the eldest client has been age 48. "Most are 14-17 years of age," she said.

Mullins works with six volunteers, who help with counseling, doctor's appointments, social services, and job searches. The ministry crosses denominational and racial lines to help women in need, she said.

Paul Blanchard, missions director for Winston Association, said the visibility of the Crisis Pregnancy Center has increased tremendously since the association's administrative assistant, Robbie Linley, served as the first director beginning in 2001. "It grew almost overnight. It got to be too much for Robbie to handle along with her other responsibilities," he said.

"The Crisis Pregnancy Center has probably been the greatest ministry this association has ever started. It's more expensive

than we realized, but our churches understand the importance of the ministry and are supporting it," he said.

Blanchard also credits gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering as being instrumental in the operation of the Crisis Pregnancy center. He applied for an associational mission project grant that has been part of the offering for several years, and the center received \$2,500 in 2002 and \$3,000 in 2003 from the offering.

Thanks to personal gifts, church support, and the state mission offering, the Crisis Pregnancy is fully funded without having to draw on the association's resources, he pointed out.

"I want to thank everyone who gave to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. The gifts to the offering have had a part in making women's lives better," said Blanchard, who recently wrote every Winston Association church to point out the importance of giving to state missions.

"I have no reservations whatsoever about what I'm doing. I don't care what people think. These women need hope, and that hope is Jesus Christ. This ministry has found a home; it's not going anywhere," she said.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Islam growing in U.S.

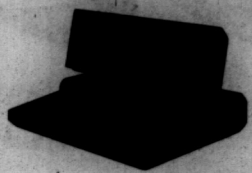
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When a person is a 'person'

The Mississippi Supreme Court last week dealt a blow to pro-abortion supporters when the justices ruled 6-2 in an otherwise unremarkable case that an unborn baby is indeed a "person" under state law. Now, to those of us not attuned to the arcane legal debates and sophisticated Manhattan salon chatter that arise over such matters, that may seem like a logical conclusion — but don't look for the pro-abortion crowd to take this ruling with good humor.

In an apparent attempt to frighten and confuse people (as well as avoid speaking directly to the Mississippi court's ruling), Sandra Goldschein, state strategies attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, invoked the U.S. Supreme Court's hoary *Roe v. Wade* ruling in 1973 that legalized abortion in America. "Anytime the fetus is recognizable as a person it chips away at the foundation of *Roe*," she told the Jackson Clarion Ledger newspaper.

Take heart. Today there is so much physical, medical, and technological evidence of the personhood of a "fetus" that abortion supporters are reduced to citing as their whole defense the discredited theories behind one 30-year-old court case.

Goldschein's baseless pettifoggery was matched by Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice Chuck McRae — so out of step with Mississippians that he was swamped in the first primary of his recent reelection attempt — who disagreed so vehemently with the ruling of the court that he was led to personally insult the justices who ruled in favor of unborn babies.

Affirming that the ruling does damage to *Roe*, McRae wrote in his dissent, "One can only wonder where its (the majority's) true motives lie in making such a decision."

Fellow Presiding Justice James Graves was the only other member of the court to vote

against the ruling, but did not include himself in McRae's dissent.

Presiding Justice Jim Smith slapped down McRae's argument in writing the majority opinion, citing McRae's dissent as "a rather weak attempt to confuse the issues as well as the bench, bar, and public..."

Kay Cobb, the court's only female presiding justice, also took issue with McRae's reasoning and wrote, "...we should further extend the majority's protection to include a pre-viable fetus from the point of conception."

Bravo! Can the issue get any simpler than that? If we just declare a person to be a person from the "point of conception," then all the expensive and exhausting legal wrangling will cease. We can do away with the laughable trimester system of fetal development instituted not by medical

experts but by the members of the U.S. Supreme Court.

We can stop debating when life technically begins so it can be ended before that point. We can do away with the ghastly infanticide of fully-developed, full-term babies. We can shut down abortion clinics, the American moral equivalent of Nazi gas chambers.

Can it happen? Will our beloved state and country one day be free of legal abortion? The answer is yes, if we work tirelessly toward that result and continue to raise up leaders like Jim Smith, Kay Cobb, and the others who are willing to take a stand toward justice for the unborn.

Baptists can lead the way in Mississippi, and Mississippi can lead the way in America. Generations yet to exist will one day thank us, if we do.



GUEST OPINION:



My very own mission field

By Janet Green, member
First Church, Florence

Mission Offering are critical in funding our Baptist camps at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko and Camp Garaywa in Clinton, where young lives are touched forever. Campers enjoy a week of great fun at a modest price and return home with a greater vision of who God is and a better understanding of the plan He has for them.

Mississippi Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action of yesterday - the products of that Mississippi Baptist camp program -- are carrying the Gospel to tribes, tongues, and nations all over the earth! It is with great awe that I consider how God is using them as integral leaders in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Finally, this offering helps

reduce out-of-pocket costs for Mississippi volunteers on short-term mission trips. These individuals offer professional, practical, or spiritual skills to enhance the work of an assigned missionary. Volunteers come to realize that spiritual needs are the same for people everywhere, though their language, clothing, and culture may differ.

Every believer is responsible for reaching out to others in our Savior's name. Jesus defines the scope of that outreach in Acts 1:8. It begins in our local communities and extends to the ends of the earth. Mississippi is my mission field, yet every life I touch here at home has the potential of reaching the world. Paul's words in Acts 17

cause us to consider the objects of our worship (v.23). He reminds us that it is God who determines the boundaries of our dwellings (v. 26). The Holy Spirit leads us to help others "seek Him perhaps reach out for Him and find Him" (v.27). Let us purpose in our hearts to pour out our worship on the One who poured out His blood for us.

If every Mississippi Baptist could give the cost of a restaurant meal, this offering would be fully funded to reap great spiritual rewards for our Lord's kingdom. It is in keeping with the gracious character of our God that whatever time, money, love, or energy we give to Him is returned to us multiplied. The blessings of belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ are incalculable.

May He use our combined gifts to impact eternity in Mississippi and to the ends of the earth through the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

Green serves as chair of the State Missions Committee for the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union executive board.

Native Americans require special ministry

CHEROKEE, N.C. (BP) — They have names like Killing Bear, Squirrel, and Youngdeer, and they have decidedly clung to many of the cultural characteristics passed down through generations. While their tribal culture is an indelible part of their identity, some Native Americans and First Nations people are claiming a new identity in a man by the name of Jesus Christ.

Merritt Youngdeer thought he had retired in 1997 after working with the federal government for 31 years. Perhaps his work with the Civil Service Corps and the Bureau of Indian Affairs was meant to prepare him for the task he has now of delivering the Gospel to the Cherokee people of North Carolina.

A Cherokee himself, he sees the native world as one community needy for, among other things, the hope of Jesus Christ. He has always had his hand in native affairs — whether out west or back east — and retirement for him meant going back to school and coming back home. He fits so comfortably into his role as pastor of Cherokee Baptist Church that you wonder if he ever really left.

Of the 60-70 folks who show up regularly at the church, 80% are Cherokee. While Youngdeer takes every opportunity possible to proclaim the Gospel and

ground his congregation in God's Word, some on the reservation have not heard or don't acknowledge such a straightforward approach to salvation. Like other Native American and First Nations tribes, among the Cherokee are many who mix the traditional native spiritism of their ancestors with elements of Christianity.

quently tossing her long, black hair. Soon she'll pick up the kids from school.

These are the people Youngdeer prays to reach. He wants Killing Bear and his wife to join people like John Squirrel, who prayed to receive Christ two years ago on his front lawn, and the more than 70 other Cherokee who have

accepted Christ since the Youngdeers returned to the reservation almost four years ago. While poverty is not as much of an epidemic in Cherokee as it is in more remote areas, the reservation is still experiencing some of the same challenges troubling many other native communities. People there

are still weighed down by alcoholism, drugs and, more recently, the gambling scene at Harrah's casino.

Reaching the younger Native Americans and First Nations people in Canada is becoming both simpler and more complicated than ever. That's because many younger natives are moving off the reservations and exposing themselves to other ways of thinking — including the truth of the Gospel — while other young natives are staying on the reservation "trying to find themselves," Youngdeer noted.

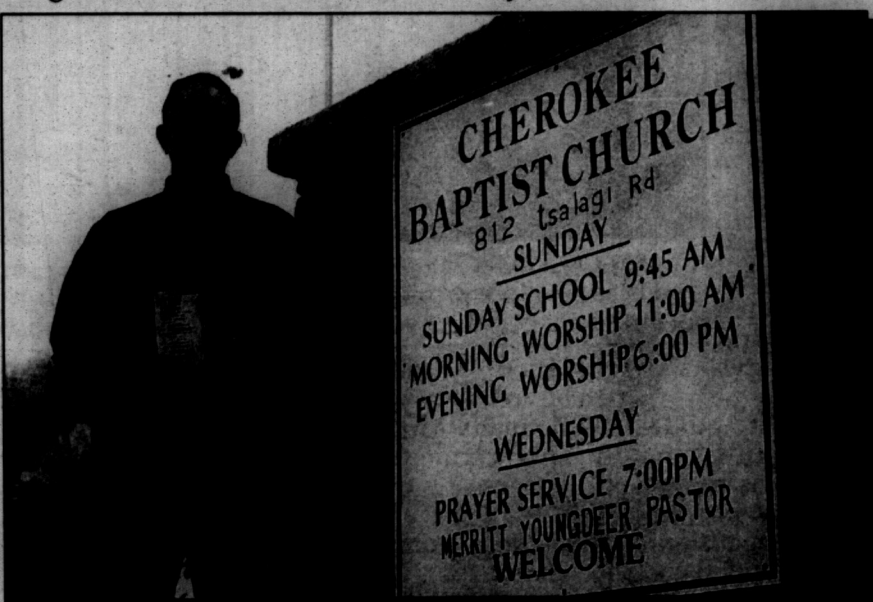
"It's not popular for them to convert to Christianity," he said. "There's a mystique about being called a Cherokee, and, to them, becoming a Christian is selling out." Still others, he said, think they're already saved by the religion passed down through their families. However, God continues to change the hearts and minds of this nation

sprawling around the Oconaluftee River, and He continues to open doors in other tribes closed off to the world by geography, culture, and suspicion. A few pointers:

- Do not assume that all Native American and First Nations tribes are in dire need of a church group to come and "save" them. While there is obviously a great need for the Gospel among native tribes, your way of approaching this need may require some cross-cultural tuning. If God is leading you to a region or tribe, pray that He would reveal to you their needs.

- Go through a Southern Baptist native association and a missionary or pastor on the reservation, and begin building relationships far in advance.

- Before heading to the reservation or reserve, learn-



PASTOR'S CAUTION — Merritt Youngdeer, pastor of Cherokee Church on the Cherokee reservation in North Carolina, cautions Baptists planning a mission trip among Native Americans to prepare and pray beforehand. (BP Photo by Adam Miller)

"My view of Christ is of a being that descended in a cloud of smoke and taught us how to care for the land and live in peace," says a man named Killing Bear.

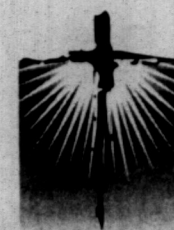
Dressed in traditional Cherokee buckskin regalia, Killing Bear says he learned the traditional dances and the dress of the Cherokee when he was a boy, and he performs dances for tourists and church groups. He stares away as he talks, his eyes glowing beneath a black band of face paint. His wife, in a Jeep Cherokee, sits nervously by, smoking and fre-

ing about the culture will help you relate to the people and show them that you care for and respect them. The missionary or pastor with whom you're partnering can provide a lot of this cultural information.

- Prepare for the need. Meeting the physical needs of the tribe is one of the best ways to reach the people for Christ. While this may take extra preparation, the result could be hearts open to the Gospel.

- Prepare for a long-term partnership with your contact and a long-term relationship with the tribal people. Native Americans and First Nations groups are not objectives on a checklist; they should be on your list of long-term friendships. Go with the idea that this is going to take a while. Yearly trips are often necessary to really begin to share in the vision of the missionary or pastor on the reservation and to really make a lasting impact on the people there.

- Take the ministry home with you.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

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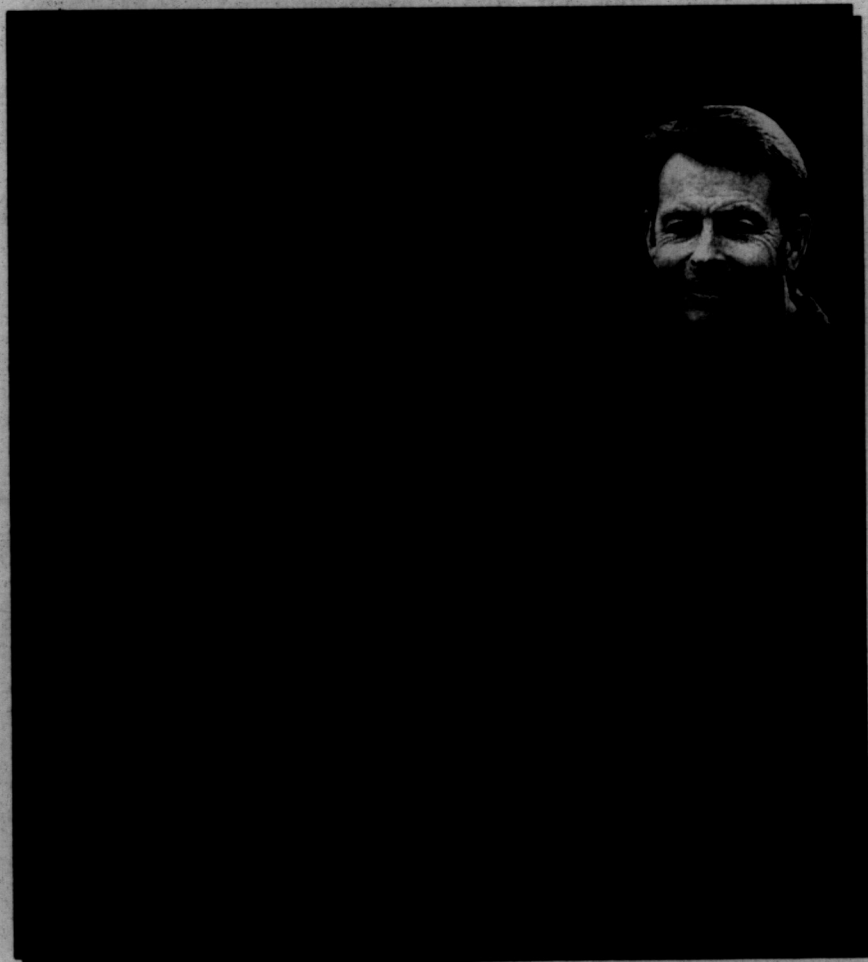
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Looking back

10 years ago

The executive director of Mississippi Baptist's Christian Action Commission escapes serious injury in a late evening, head-on collision in Webster County. Paul G. Jones II was returning to Jackson when he was struck by a Suzuki Sidekick sport utility vehicle.

20 years ago

For the first time, a church in the U.S. says it will break the law by not withholding federal taxes from employees who object to military spending. Members of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church say that the tax violates their pacifist beliefs.

30 years ago

Blanche Ramsay of Ocean Springs, writes the editor of The Baptist Record: "You know nothing; you should see how ungodly the people live here on the coast, old gray-haired grandmothers going everywhere in shorts or bathing suits — thinking nothing of it."

Speaker: retreat of church tracks Islam rise

Ala. Judge suspended for 10 days

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP) — Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore will be suspended from his position for 10 days, pending the outcome of an ethics complaint for refusing to follow a federal court order to remove the Ten Commandments monument he ordered installed in the Alabama judicial building in 2001.

Moore was automatically suspended with pay Aug. 22 when the nine-member Alabama Judicial Inquiry Commission referred an ethics complaint against Moore to the Court of the Judiciary, which holds trial-like proceedings and can discipline and remove judges.

Moore has been steadfast in his refusal to remove the 5,300-pound Ten Commandments monument, missing the Aug. 20 deadline given by federal Judge Myron Thompson.

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Islam is rising in America not because of its strength, but because of the retreat of the church — and if the religion founded by Muhammad 1,400 years ago continues to grow at its current rate, there will be more Muslims than Christians in every major U.S. city by 2020.

Those observations were voiced by Islam expert Carl Ellis during the Aug. 15-17 National Conference on Islam cosponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources and the North American Mission Board's interfaith evangelism team at LifeWay's Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

Ellis is co-founder of Project Joseph, an effort to educate the church about contemporary issues. An expert on Islam who travels around the world and speaks extensively on the subject, he was among the conference's featured speakers.

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world, with 1.2 billion devotees, with Ellis reporting its growth at 2.75% per year. By some accounts, Muslims will overtake the current 1.8 billion Christians by 2020.

In America, where there are an estimated 7 million followers, Islam is growing at a six-percent annual rate. White Americans are the fastest-growing segment of U.S. Islam, and 80-85% of all U.S. Muslims consider themselves former Christians. If present trends continue, every major U.S. city will be predominantly Muslim by 2020, Ellis warned.

"We must understand that there is a comprehensive plan in

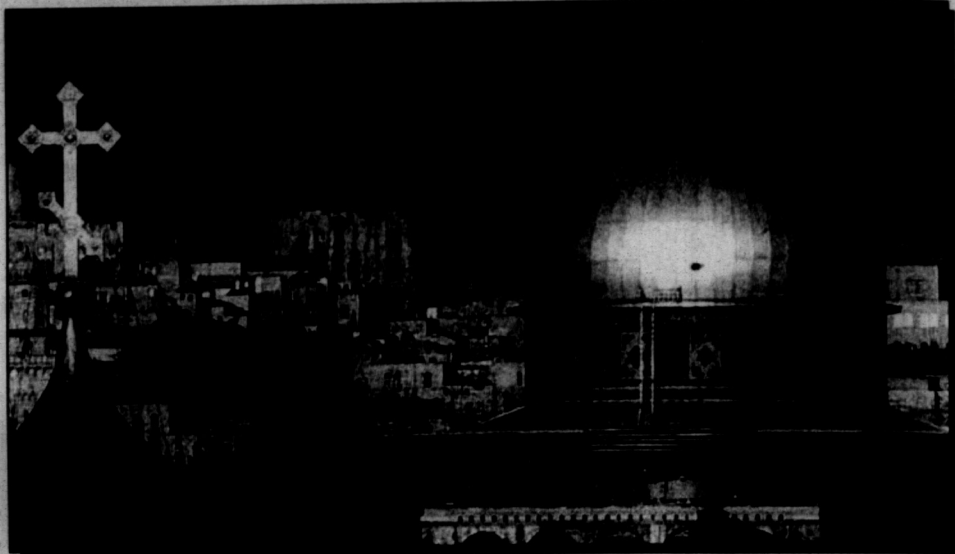
progress to Islamicize America and the West," said Ellis, noting that since 1973 the Organization of Islamic Conference has spent about \$105 billion in this effort, much of it funded by Middle East oil revenues.

If this troubles Christians, as it should, they need not look at Islam's success, but at Christianity's failure, Ellis said. "The church in America has reduced the Gospel of the Kingdom to peddling personal fire insurance. As I talk to Muslims who have left the church, I find that they don't feel the church addresses their issues and needs — yet the Bible speaks to every one of them."

Two axioms must guide Christian thinking about Islam, Ellis said. First, Islam is a system, while Muslims are people. Christians must challenge Islam and love Muslims. Second, there are three things a Muslim has no defense against — the prayers of the saints, the love of the saints and the wise application of the Word of God to their core issues.

"I find among Muslims a sincere desire to be right with God — especially among American converts," Ellis said, noting that he has personally seen more than 1,800 leave Islam and place their trust in Christ, often at great risk to their lives since Islam teaches that leaving the religion is a capital offense.

Ellis described Islam as a "works-righteousness treadmill. There is no assurance of



CLASH OF SYMBOLS — The meeting between the symbols of Christianity and Islam in close proximity in the city of Jerusalem is representative of the face-off between the two religions worldwide. (BP photo)

salvation — with the possible exception of dying in jihad." While many Muslims ultimately embrace the Gospel because of its message of God's grace, Ellis said the church has not adequately prepared believers to share that message. "We have neglected the teachings of the Bible. I suspect Islam is rising, not because of the strength they have, but because of the retreat of the church."

Ellis said what's happening in America — the decline of the church — is what already has happened in other parts of the world. "People used to say Islam would never take hold in the Holy Land because Christianity was too strong. But look at Jerusalem, where the Mosque of Omar, the third most holy place in Islam, sits atop the ruins of the temple where Jesus taught.

"People used to say Islam would never take hold in Asia Minor, where the seven churches of Revelation were. But today this is Turkey, and Turkey is a Muslim nation."

"The same was said about North Africa, where Islam reigns today. Can anyone say America is safe as a Christian nation?"

Still, Ellis is hopeful. He said if Christians return to the Bible, embrace and engage Muslims in loving dialogue, the Gospel message will water the "dry well" of Islam."

LifeWay and NAMB will host a second National Conference on Islam Sept. 19-21 at LifeWay's Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico. For more information or to register online, log on to www.lifeway.com/islam.

Fundamentals of Islam described at conference

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Rudy Gonzalez, Tal Davis, and N.S.R.K. Ravi of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's interfaith evangelism

AD), an Arab who claimed he received supernatural revelations from God (Allah) through the angel Gabriel. These revelations were written down by others and compiled into a book called the Koran. Islam claims 1.2 billion followers worldwide.

PURPOSE

The ultimate goal of many Muslims is to extend the "Ummah" (community of Islam) throughout the world and then rule it according to Islamic law. Islam claims to be the restoration of original monotheism and thus supersedes both Judaism and Christianity. Islamic law teaches that conversion may be achieved through persuasion or subjugation, but some hold that if these fail, "infidels" may be eliminated if necessary.

BEGINNINGS

Islam began with Muhammad's perceived visions and revelations. Because Muhammad could neither read nor write, he memorized the revelations and ordered his followers to write them down. These writings became Islam's holy book, the Koran. Muhammad at first feared his revelations came from a jinn, or evil spirit, but later he accepted their source as divine and taught that he alone was the true recipient of Allah's truth.

DESCRIPTION

Islam is the fastest-growing world religion, founded by Muhammad (570-632

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

Muslims accept only the Koran as the Word of God. They believe Allah's earli-

er revelations in the Bible have been corrupted by Jews and Christians and are therefore untrustworthy.

RELIGIOUS DUTIES

Every Muslim must practice at least five fundamental religious duties. Known as the Pillars of Islam, they are:

- The confession of faith or Shahada: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." If a Muslim repudiates the Shahada, it nullifies his or her hope of salvation.

- Prayer or Salat. The Muslim must recite prayers while facing Mecca five times a day.

- The observance of Ramadan, a month of fasting throughout the daylight hours to commemorate the first revelation of the Koran to Muhammad.

- Almsgiving or Zakat. Muslims are required to give 2.5 percent of their currency, plus other forms of wealth, as determined by a complicated system that purifies their remaining wealth.

- Pilgrimage, or Hajj, to Mecca, Muhammad's birthplace. Every Muslim who is physically and financially able must make this trek at least once in his or her lifetime.

- Some Islamic scholars consider Jihad ("endeavor, strive, struggle, holy war") as the sixth pillar of Islam and consider Jihad superior to the obligatory acts of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage. This view is not universally held in Islam.



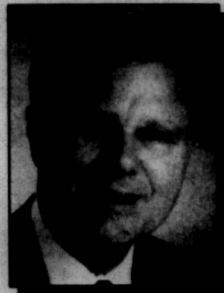
HAI PARTICIPANTS — Muslim women, traditionally considered second-class citizens in most of the countries where followers of Islam are in political control, gather and prepare for the annual haj pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. (BP photo)

STATE MISSIONS O

All across Mississippi churches are encouraged and challenged to be a part of the Week of Prayer for State Missions and the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. If you look at the title of this article, it says **State Missions O**. It is not a misprint or malfunction. While I would like to share some things with you about the offering, more importantly I would like to share with you some thoughts about the **O**. This **O** does not stand for zero — nor does it refer to Offering. Let me clarify.

Possibly, all of you are aware that in most sports like football, basketball, or baseball people refer to the different phases of the game as the **O** and the **D**. The **O** stands for the offense and the **D** stands for the defense. Just the other day I heard a football coach saying, as his team is approaching the fall football season, "Our **O** is in pretty good shape, but our **D** is the real strength of our team." Well in Mississippi Baptist life our **O** is the real strength of our team.

I have heard coaches say that the best offense is a good defense. I have also heard folks say the reverse is true that the best defense is a good offense. I am not sure which is exactly true, but I do know you have got to have an offense to put points on the board and to win. When it comes to our mission efforts to reach Mississippi with the good news of Jesus, the State Missions Offering provides a vehicle for us to have a great offense. Literally, the funds provided through this offering enable us to pene-



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

trate dimensions and sectors in our state and society that otherwise would not be touched.

I call it the **State Missions O** because virtually every penny of the offering permits us to be proactive and on the offense, seriously and by design, penetrating our world with the Good News of Jesus. Just think about what a difference it makes when we give to the causes touched by the State Missions Offering. It is this offering that sustains our camps and makes it possible for boys and girls to come to one of our encampments and there have an experience with the Lord.

We have just come out of the summer camping season where literally hundreds and hundreds of boys and girls had their hearts touched and many of them came to know Jesus because of Camp Garaywa and Central Hills. Every week a new group of boys showed up at Central Hills and a new group of girls went to Garaywa. There they were encouraged, challenged, blessed, and many of them were saved because of the investment of Mississippi Baptists to make sure that we had these camp facilities. If you gave to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering, you made an eternal difference in the life of some young person.

As you look at other areas of need in our state, you will recognize that this offering provides the offensive push for us to start more and more churches. We think of ourselves as a state with so many churches and yet it is incredible to realize that Mississippi is 57% unchurched. In our state on any given Sunday morning about 800,000 people are in church. That means that about two million people are not in church. As our population expands and shifts, we have got to be proactive and be on the front edge of helping young churches start, grow, and reach people for Christ.

Time does not permit me in this space to show all of the places and ways that the State Missions Offering reaches into areas and carries the Gospel on the offensive into our culture. Just think about the places and opportunities that are touched because you give. Your gifts will find their way to be on the scene in our communities or in our state almost immediately wherever a disaster strike. You will help to build a bridge into the jails and prisons across our state where men and women desperately need to know Christ and find hope in Him. Some of the money will help undergird peo-

ple who feel called to be engaged in mission efforts but do not have enough resources to go. Because of your gift they are able to go.

Your help is needed not just to reach a goal but to be on the offensive for Christ in our world. Let me show you how you can help. If your church has not given to the State Missions Offering, would you pray about helping them understand what a blessing they can be by participating? Of our 2,100 churches in Mississippi, last year about 1,000 gave nothing to support the State Missions Offering. Why? I suppose there are probably a thousand different reasons, but this year let's pray that more, maybe even all, will do something to help.

I certainly recognize that 1.5 million dollars is a lot of money, but for just a moment think about how money is spent in Mississippi in another comparative way. Do you realize on the average on every day of the week, every week of the year Mississippians spend over \$500,000 on alcoholic beverages? What that means is that every three days — think about it — every three days people in Mississippi spend more on alcohol than all of Mississippi Baptists are challenged and encouraged to give to the State Missions Offering. Something is not right with this picture. You and I can go on the offensive and our gifts can help make a difference in a warped world. Pray and then let the Lord use you to be one of the channels of blessing by giving to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. God bless you.

Miss. WMU offers trip to Celebration

The Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) is offering a bus trip to the Annual Missions Celebration at Harrisburg Church in Tupelo, leaving from Camp Garaywa in Clinton at 7:00 a.m. on October 3, and returning to Camp Garaywa following the October 4 afternoon session on October 4.

The Annual Missions Celebration will be the kick-off event for a year of celebrating 125 years of organized missions service by Southern Baptist women in Mississippi. The year will be completed with the Annual Missions Celebration at Emmanuel Church in Carroll on October 8-9, 2004.

Cost of the trip to include bus transportation, meals, lodging at the Harrisburg Church, and conference on Thursday, October 3, is \$100.00. For more information, contact the WMU office at 1000 N. Main St., Clinton, MS 39056. Phone: 662-925-1111.

Annuity board sets new medical plans for 2004

SAN FRANCISCO (BP) — New and expanded medical plans for Southern Baptist ministers, church, and denominational employees and seminary students will be offered by the Annuity Board for 2004. The new plans were announced by Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins and trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention entity during an Aug. 4-5 trustee meeting in San Francisco.

Benefits of the new preferred provider organization (PPO) plans include copays for doctor's office visits, a variety of coinsurance levels and deductibles ranging from \$0-\$3,000.

Anyone currently participating in one of the Annuity Board's self-funded medical plans will be required to select a new plan for 2004. The Annuity Board will provide extensive information on the new plans and allow existing participants to enroll in a new plan for 2004 and then transfer to any other available Annuity Board plan the following year without providing proof of good health.

Final negotiations are underway with a major national PPO network to provide medical plan participants in select areas with a choice of networks beginning Jan. 1. This new network, along with the PPO networks made available through The Principal Financial Group (The Principal), would allow more than 99% of current Annuity Board medical plan participants to access PPO doctors and healthcare facilities.

The new PPO plans will encourage

the use of network providers by paying less for services provided by out-of-network providers. For example, a plan that pays 80% of the cost of care received from a network provider might pay only 50% or 60% for the same service received from an out-of-network provider.

There will be three new out-of-area plans available for the small number of

both organizations have participated in several activities designed to promote healthy lifestyles.

The TBC has seen an improvement in medical claims over the past 12 months. "Our wellness program is making people aware that everything they do can affect the whole group's claims experience," Garnett Hogan, a TBC staffer, said. "We asked our employees to commit to doing just one thing to improve their health, and we're already seeing positive results."

Preventive care benefits will be available in all of the core PPO plans for 2004. New features include a \$250 benefit per person for preventive care, a wider range of services covered by the wellness benefit, and no dollar limit for rou-

tine immunizations for children up to age two. A new disease management program will help individuals diagnosed with coronary heart disease or diabetes better manage their conditions and stay healthier. Prenatal care management also will be available.

Details on the new medical plans, including rates, will be mailed to all current Annuity Board medical plan participants in mid-September. Participants in the board's Personal Plans will see a change from a three-tier to a four-tier rating structure for 2004. The new structure gives participants who cover two or more children, but not their spouse, an opportunity to save money.

The next scheduled meeting of trustees will be Nov. 3-4 in Dallas.



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participants who do not have access to a PPO network.

In addition to the core plans, a limited benefit plan will provide a low-cost coverage option for those who might not otherwise be able to afford medical coverage. It will allow employees who previously would have been ineligible for coverage to enroll themselves and their families in an Annuity Board medical plan, but those in the limited benefit plan will not have the option to transfer to another plan in the future.

Wellness has been a major focus of the Annuity Board. In 2002, the Annuity Board began a pilot wellness program with the Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC). Over the past year and a half, employees from

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The children's Bible Drill class from Franklin Church, Flora, recently took a trip to Bible Drill Camp, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko. Pictured (from left) are Donnie South, pastor, Jessica Miller, Baley South, Amber Peden, Megan Heathcock, Destry Arender, and Diane Peden, leader.

Glendale Church, Glenn, held VBS June 2-6. Enrollment was 125 with an average attendance of 95. Six professions of faith were made. Ron Plymel is pastor.

The Earl and Mona Hewitt WOM group of First Church, Jackson, along with Martha Stockstill of the Internationals Ministry threw an end of the school year party for the Teen Club girls of West Park. Jennifer Crawford, Urban Ministry Director of the center, shared her personal testimony.

RA Races were recently held at Broadmoor Church, Madison. Pictured are the RA Racer winners.

The RAs of Union Church, Brookhaven, recently presented a check to the Annie Armstrong Offering of \$127. Pictured (from left) are Stephen Jenkins, Ryan Smith, Chase Crane, Brady Crane, and Roger Myrick, leader.

The children of Wesson Church, Wesson, attended Student Life Kids Camp at the Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, July 15-18. Here for a Purpose was the camp theme and they studied Jeremiah 29:11. Pictured are the campers.



Bible Drill Participants of Franklin Church, Flora



RAs of Broadmoor Church, Madison



RAs of Union Church, Brookhaven



Student Life Kids Camp participants of Wesson Church, Wesson



VBS Participants of Glendale Church, Glenn



WOM group of First Church, Jackson

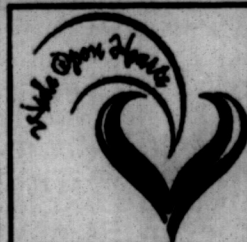
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Garaywa, Clinton • Dr. Dean Register
William Carey College, Hattiesburg • Dr. Les Hughes

September 25

Central Hills, Kosciusko • Dr. Carl White
Lauderdale Association Office, Meridian • Dr. Les Hughes
Pike Association Office, McComb • Dr. Dean Register

Registration 9:00 - 9:30 • Conference 9:30 - 2:30 (Lunch is provided)

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